

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 9-10, 14-15, and 17-20 without prejudice or disclaimer, and AMEND claims 1, 3, 5-6, 11-13, 16, and 22 in accordance with the following:

1. (currently amended) A method of providing points based on a search using retrieval of keywords, the method comprising:

presenting keywords to a first user through a network, and storing keywords selected from the presented keywords by the first user into a user-by-keyword management table relating to the first user;

presenting keywords to an advertiser through the network, and storing keywords selected by the advertiser into an advertiser-by-keyword management table relating to the advertiser;

searching the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table for keywords when a search using there has been a request for retrieving the keywords is requested by from a second user different from the first user through the network, and when the requested keywords have been registered both in the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table, posting a ~~retrieved~~ result of the search along with an keywords and advertisement of the corresponding advertiser to the second user through the network; and

giving points to the first user when the second user has referred to the advertisement, and storing these points into a user's-point management table relating to the first user.

2. (previously presented) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the points gained by the first user are exchanged for a product or a service.

3. (currently amended) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the points comprise user points that are generated when the ~~second user has retrieved result of the search using~~ the user-obtained keywords is posted, and advertiser points that are generated when the second user has referred to the advertisement.

4. (previously presented) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the keywords selected by the first user are stored free of charge, and the first user can select the free keywords at the time of making a contract on the utilization of a network service.

5. (currently amended) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the keywords selected by the first user charged, and purchase prices of the charged keywords are determined based on a past record of searches using retrieval of the keywords by other users.

6. (currently amended) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the keywords selected by the first user include charged keywords and free keywords, and charged keywords of which a search retrieval record by other users is low are converted to free keywords, and free keywords of which a search retrieval record by the other users is high are converted to charged keywords.

7. (original) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the keywords selected by the advertisers include charged keywords and free keywords, and the advertisers can select the free keywords only after the advertisers have selected the charged keywords.

8. (previously presented) The method of providing points according to the claim 1, wherein the first user who has registered the keywords can select a display on the Web or a transmission by e-mail as a method of presenting the advertisement to the other users.

9. (cancelled)

10. (cancelled)

11. (currently amended) A method of providing points based on a search using retrieval of keywords, the method comprising:

displaying-retrieved results of a search using keywords together with an advertisement of an advertiser corresponding to the keywords at a first user's terminal, when the first user has requested the search using retrieved the keywords from the first user's terminal through a network; and

giving points to a second user who has selected the keywords from keywords previously presented to the second user, when the first user has referred to the displayed advertisement.

12. (currently amended) An apparatus for providing points, said apparatus comprising:

a user-selected keyword storing unit which stores keywords that a first user has selected from available presented keywords through a network, relating to the first user;

an advertiser-selected keyword storing unit which stores keywords that an advertiser has selected through the network, relating to the advertiser;

an advertiser-retrieving unit which retrieves an advertiser corresponding to keywords by referring to an advertiser-by-keyword management table, when another user different from the first user who has requested a search retrieved through the network using the keywords that have been registered in both a user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table;

a transmitting unit which transmits the search retrieved results together with an advertisement of the advertiser to the another user;

a user retrieving unit which retrieves the first user corresponding to the keywords by referring to the user-by-keyword management table, when the another user has referred to the advertisement;

a point allocating unit which gives points to the first user who has obtained the keyword; and

a point registering unit which registers the points by relating the points to the first user.

13. (currently amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points based on a search using retrieval of keywords, the method comprising:

presenting keywords to a first user through a network, and storing keywords selected from the presented keywords by the first user into a user-by-keyword management table relating to the first user;

presenting keywords to an advertiser through the network, and storing keywords selected by the advertiser into an advertiser-by-keyword management table relating to the advertiser;

searching the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table for keywords when a search using there has been a request for retrieving the keywords is requested by from a second user different from the first user through the network,

and when the requested keywords have been registered both in the user-by-keyword management table and the advertiser-by-keyword management table, posting a ~~retrieved~~ result of the search along with an ~~keywords and~~ advertisement of the corresponding advertiser to the second user through the network; and

giving points to the first user when the second user has referred to the advertisement, and storing these points into a user's-point management table relating to the first user.

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (currently amended) A computer readable medium for storing instructions, which when executed on a computer, causes the computer to perform a method of providing points based on a search using ~~retrieval of~~ keywords, the method comprising :

displaying ~~retrieved~~ results of a search using keywords together with an advertisement of an advertiser corresponding to the keywords at a first user's terminal, when the first user has requested the search using ~~retrieved~~ the keywords from the user's terminal through a network; and

giving points to a second user who has selected the keywords from keywords previously presented to the second user, when the first user has referred to the displayed advertisement.

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) A method for providing points based on a search using ~~retrieval of~~ keywords, comprising:

providing information to a first user responsive to a requested search corresponding

to selection of keywords; and

assigning at least one point to a second user in response to any of the requested keywords being selected and registered, by the second user, from a keywords previously presented to the second user and associated with the provided information.